

## INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS SELECTION POLICY

### I. General Principles

The Souhegan School Board is responsible for the quality of education in the Souhegan School District. Implicit in that responsibility is the selection of educational materials appropriate to the educational needs of all students.

Citizens have a right to express their concerns about educational materials. In the event that a formal request is made for the reevaluation of a specific book, film, or other item and its appropriateness in the school, the School Board will conduct the review process objectively from the point of view of the Board's selection policy, the child's right to have access to the materials, and the teacher's right to use such resources toward the fulfillment of the school's educational objectives.

### II. DEFINITIONS OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

**Classroom instructional materials** include printed, audio-visual, and technological materials obtained primarily for use in classes, courses, grades or with other student grouping.

**School information center materials** include printed, audio-visual, and technological materials and services available for general use by students.

**Print materials** include books, magazines, newspapers, pamphlets as well as other items such as vertical file material.

**Audio-visual materials** include films, videotapes (see attached guidelines for use), slides, photographs, charts, maps, globes, and other types of visual presentations.

**Technological materials** and services include computer software, CD-ROMS, laser disks, and on-line databases.

### III. RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

The Souhegan School Board is legally responsible for all matter relating to the operation of the schools, including the selection of instructional materials. The Board affirms the principles of the freedom to read and view, the freedom to teach, the freedom to learn, and the exercise of professional responsibility by educators.

The responsibility for the selection of instructional materials is delegated to the professionally trained personnel employed by the school system. These include the

superintendent, principals, assistant principals, information specialists, deans, teachers, and specialists.

- A. The responsibility for coordinating the selection of instructional materials for the information center and making recommendations for purchase is delegated to the Information Specialist and the principal.
- B. The responsibility for coordinating the selection of classroom instructional materials and for making the recommendations for use in the classroom is delegated to the deans and the principals.
- C. The decision for purchase and rental rests with the central office administration.

#### **IV. OBJECTIVES FOR SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

The primary objective of Souhegan's Guidelines for Selecting Instructional Materials is to implement, enrich, and support the mission of the school.

The Souhegan School Board asserts the responsibility of the school is:

- A. To provide a wide range of materials and information that will enrich and support the curriculum, taking into consideration the varied interests, abilities, and maturity levels of the students served.
- B. To provide materials and information that will stimulate growth in factual knowledge, literary appreciation, aesthetic value, and ethical standards.
- C. To provide a background of information which will enable students to make intelligent judgements in their daily life.
- D. To provide materials and information on opposing sides of controversial issues so that young citizens may develop, under guidance, the practice of critical analysis of all information sources.
- E. To provide materials and information representative of the many groups in our pluralistic society and their contributions (by both sexes, and various religions, ethnic, racial, and cultural groups) to both American and world heritages.
- F. To place principle above personal opinion and reason above prejudice in the selection of materials of the highest quality.
- G. To provide materials that will meet the needs of the professional staff in fulfilling the school's educational objectives.

## **V. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

In the selection process, primary consideration is given to the relationship of the material to school district philosophy and the goals and objectives of the curriculum. Teacher and student needs, as well as existing resources and resources available through networking, will also be considered. The following criteria will be used, as they apply:

- A. Materials shall support and be consistent with the general educational goals of the district and the objectives of a specific course.
- B. Materials shall meet high standards of quality in factual content and presentation, including authority, scope, and reliability of the work.
- C. Materials shall be appropriate for the subject area and for the age, maturation, ability level, and social development of the students for whom the materials are selected.
- D. Materials shall be provided to help students gain an awareness and understanding of the contributions made by both sexes; by religious, ethnic, and cultural groups to the American heritage.
- E. The selection of materials on controversial issues shall be directed toward maintaining a balanced collection representing various views. The intent will be to select materials that are unbiased as far as moral, religious, racial, ethnic, or sexual values are concerned.

## **VI. PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION, REPLACEMENT, OR WITHDRAWAL OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

In selecting or accepting materials, educational personnel evaluate the existing materials and consult the following:

- A. Reputable, unbiased, professionally prepared selection aids including book lists, special bibliographies, and current reviewing media such as publications of the American Library Association, National Council of Teachers of English, National Council for the Social Studies, National Science Teachers Association, and the publications of other professional educational organizations.
- B. Subject specialists and other educators at all grade levels.
- C. Media or curriculum committees which serve in an advisory capacity in the

selection of materials and information services.

- D. Gift materials are judged and either accepted or rejected on the basis of these selection standards.
- E. Multiple items of outstanding quality and high demand materials are purchased as needed.
- F. Worn or missing standard items are replaced periodically.
- G. Out-of-date or materials that are no longer useful are withdrawn from the collection.
- H. Sets of materials and materials acquired by subscription are examined carefully, and are purchased only to fill a definite need.

APPROVED: May 1994  
Souhegan

## **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE FOR RECONSIDERATION OF INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS**

Despite the care to select valuable materials for student and teacher use, and the qualifications of persons who select the materials, occasional questions regarding a selection may arise from a member of the public. The principles of the freedom to read and of the professional responsibility of the staff must be defended rather than the materials. However, should a resident wish to request reconsideration of instructional material, s/he may. Any Amherst/Mont Vernon resident who objects to any materials currently available for student and teacher use shall be treated with courtesy and provided the opportunity to read, view, or listen to the complete work. In order to review the material in question the resident must make arrangements with the building principal. If, after this review, the resident wishes to request a reconsideration of the district's use of the instructional material, the following procedures will prevail:

- A. A staff member receiving a request for reconsideration will notify the principal within one working day, in writing, including the following details:
  1. Name of petitioner
  2. Author and title of material in question
- B. The individual requesting the reconsideration shall meet with the building principal and an appropriate professional staff member (Dean, lead teacher, or Information Specialist) to discuss the material in question.
- C. If, after such meeting, an individual wishes to petition for reconsideration, the principal will send the Policy for Selecting Instructional Materials, the Administrative Procedures for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials, and the Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form to the resident, as well as make the item in question available to the resident to read, view, or listen to, in its entirety.
- D. The completed Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials form shall be returned to the Superintendent within fifteen (15) working days.
- E. Classroom instructional materials being questioned will continue to be used during the review proceedings. However, a parent initiating the reconsideration may request that the material not be accessible to their child pending the outcome of the review.

- F. School Information Center material being questioned will remain in the Information Center during the review process.
- G. The superintendent will appoint a nine (9) member School Advisory Committee comprised of.
  - 1. The school information specialist
  - 2. The principal or dean
  - 3. A person involved in the selection
  - 4. Five citizens of Amherst and Mont Vernon
  - 5. A senior student selected by the Community Council
- H. The superintendent will submit a copy of the formal Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Material to the chairperson. Within six (6) working days of receipt of the form, the superintendent will notify the petitioner as to when the issue will be reviewed.
- I. The School Advisory Committee will:
  - 1. Elect a chairperson who will develop procedures with committee members and receive the petition form.
  - 2. Notify the petitioner that s/he may request a meeting with the School Advisory Committee and explain her/his request verbally.
  - 3. Read and examine referred materials.
  - 4. Check general acceptance of the materials by reading reviews and professionally prepared selection aids.
  - 5. Re-examine the material in question, in light of the district philosophy and selection criteria and objectives.
  - 6. Weigh values and shortcomings and decide on the acceptability based on the material as a whole, and not on individual passages out of context.
  - 7. Issue to the principal a decision report written and signed by the Committee as a whole within twenty (20) working days after receiving the written presentation by the petitioner.
  - 8. Advise the Principal to forward copies of the decision report to the petitioner and, if it seems advisable, to other parties.

J. Appeal Procedure

1. Petitioner

- a. The petitioner has a right to appeal the decision of the Committee to the superintendent. Notification of the petitioner's intent to appeal should be received by the superintendent within ten (10) working days of the Advisory Committee's decision.
- b. The superintendent will review the petition and decision rendered by the Committee. If the decision requires further consideration, the superintendent will reach a decision regarding the petition and inform the petitioner and the Committee in writing within fifteen (15) working days,
- c. The superintendent decision may be appealed to the School Board which will review all relevant information and issue its decision in writing. Notification of the petitioner's intent to appeal should be received by the superintendent within ten (10) working days of the superintendent's decision.

2. Superintendent

- a. The superintendent has a right to appeal the decision of the committee to the School Board. Notification of the superintendent's intent to appeal should be received by the School Board within ten (10) working days of the committee's decision.

ADOPTED: May 1994  
SOUHEGAN

**SOUHEGAN SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Amherst, New Hampshire

Request for Reconsideration of Instructional Materials

In order to review the material in question, please make arrangements with the building principal. Completion of this form will initiate the reconsideration process. Please return the completed form to the principal within fifteen (15) working days. If you require more space than is given, please use the reverse side of the pages, or affix additional pages.

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

TYPE OF MATERIAL: \_\_\_ Book \_\_\_ Periodical \_\_\_ Video/Film  
\_\_\_ Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

AUTHOR/PRODUCER \_\_\_\_\_

PUBLISHER/DISTRIBUTOR \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL/GRADE/COURSE USING THIS MATERIAL: \_\_\_\_\_

REQUEST INITIATED BY: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: WORK \_\_\_\_\_ HOME \_\_\_\_\_

1. To what is this work do you object? (Please be specific by citing pages, frames, etc.)

2. Did you read, view, listen to the entire work?

3. What do you believe might be the result of using this work?

